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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

Note verbale dated 27 January 1992 from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Iraq to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Centre for Human Rights

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Iraq to the United Nations Office at Geneva presents its compliments to the Centre for Human Rights and has the honour to request the circulation of the note attached hereto, concerning the economic blockade of Iraq and its effects on the Iraqi people as a whole, as an official document of the forty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights under agenda item 12.

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1. While wishing to confirm its willingness to cooperate with the United Nations on the subject of human rights, and particularly with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Iraq, Iraq deems it essential to draw the attention of the Commission on Human Rights to the need to show equal concern for all human rights, whether civil and political or economic, social and cultural, as affirmed in United Nations resolutions, the most recent of which was General Assembly resolution 45/96 of 14 December 1990.

2. In view of the interdependence of human rights, the Commission on Human Rights has a special humanitarian and international responsibility in regard to the ongoing sufferings of the Iraqi people as a whole due to the insistence on continuing the economic blockade, particularly since the international community and United Nations bodies are fully aware of the adverse effects of the economic blockade as described in the reports that have been published on this subject. Iraq also notes that the United Nations bodies concerned with human rights are disregarding this major tragedy affecting 18 million Iraqis and are focusing on the consideration of cases that can be regarded as individual in comparison with the general situation of its citizens as a whole. They are also turning a blind eye to the sufferings of an entire people which is virtually being subjected to genocide. Account should be taken of the fact that Iraq is cooperating with the committees concerned with human rights with a view to finding solutions to all the questions that are being raised by the Special Rapporteur on Iraq or the working groups, including questions concerning the individual cases to which reference has been made above.

3. We wish to point out that Iraq has submitted a document on the effects of the blockade on economic, social and cultural rights under item 7 of the agenda of the forty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights.

4. Disregard for the sufferings of thousands of children, women and elderly and sick persons unquestionably constitutes a flagrant violation of the most important human rights, namely the right to life and the right to an adequate standard of living. This serious problem, which is threatening an entire people, should therefore be given urgent consideration by the Commission.

5. Iraq is in no way less eager than the international bodies concerned to strengthen human rights. In fact, it can be said that Iraq is more concerned than others who are allegedly seeking to promote human rights in Iraq for the simple reason that such promotion is in the interests of our country and our citizens and conducive to the cessation of the accusations that are being made against Iraq with a view to besmirching its international reputation. Accordingly, Iraq emphasizes the need to deal with the question of human rights in Iraq in an objective manner, taking into consideration the effects of the blockade on human rights as a whole.

6. Such an objective approach to the economic blockade would help to strengthen the credibility of the committees concerned with human rights. It would also lead to a positive improvement in the human rights situation in Iraq, which is the goal towards which we should all be striving in a spirit of impartiality totally unaffected by other circumstances and factors.